

THE VITAL FORCE

Journal of T'AI CHI CHIH! Joy Through Movement

Volume 14, No. 1

Spring Equinox

March 1997

T'AI CHI CHIH IS JOY!

Justin Stone

People do their thinking with their emotions. This is a sure path to suffering. They manifest hate while speaking abstractly of love. Then they wonder why they have unfulfilled lives.

The Buddhist Abidhamma (Buddhist Psychology) says there are sixty-odd joyous states of consciousness and only three miserable ones. Yet people rush blindly toward the three negative ways. Why? If we know that Craving, Anger, and Delusion cause us suffering, why do we entertain these three? Are we compulsive and compelled to think and act in this manner?



In order to hide the truth from ourselves, we cultivate neuroses. "He went to his Mahasamadhi" we say, when the truth is "he died". Aren't we all going to die?

Spiritual practice causes us to accord with death not to fear it. We know excess attachment and aversion (I love this, I hate that) cause us suffering yet we allow sentiment and deluded emotion to lead us down that path. "Impermanence" is a fact of life; why fear it? Tantra says that every cell in the body can be brought to a point of ecstasy. Inside we have the treasure we are searching for. Why not follow this joyous Way?

**Don't go outside your house to see flowers. My friend, don't bother with that excursion.
Inside your body there are flowers. One flower has a thousand petals.
That will do for a place to sit. Sitting there you will have a glimpse of beauty
inside the body and out of it, before gardens and after gardens.**

Kabir, 15th Century



*Justin Stone is the Originator of T'ai Chi Chih! Joy Thru Movement.
This journal is dedicated to T'ai Chi Chih teachers and practitioners worldwide.
May it serve you in "Knowing the Real".*

REFLECTIONS . . . ALONG THE WAY



Spring Meditation

The sky a magenta mirage,
as trees stick their twigs in the air,
and fowl in winged procession
proclaim the rebirth of spring.

The stillness of winter is gone,
as buds burst to flower once again,
plum blossoms gracing tree branches
bear witness to cyclical splendor.

VFJ INNER WORKINGS

The strong flow of written contributions and artistic expressions submitted to *VFJ* for this March Issue is both moving and indicative that the T'ai Chi Chih community is open to sharing, enrichment, and growth.

Functioning as the connecting link for teachers, students, and aspiring teacher candidates to the greater TCC community, *VFJ's* purpose is to provide a format which inspires and informs the reader regarding teaching, news, methods, and materials as a way of staying current with the practice of TCC. We reserve the right to discern in choosing and editing articles, letters, and information for publication which constructively reflect this intent.

Your many wonderful letters of gratitude are deeply appreciated. Also noteworthy is the continuing financial support received from our TCC family. Thank you! These contributions allow us to keep subscription fees and TCC Teachers' Directory costs to a minimum.

Teachers' Directory Completed

The 1997 Teachers' Directory has been mailed. Teachers not receiving their copy may direct inquiry to Lois Mahaney (510-276-5718). Our thanks to Lois for the considerable effort of compiling the directory.

Highlights of this Issue

As announced, Justin Stone's article on *Chi Enhancement* is included in this issue (see page 10). Plans for the 1997 Teachers' Conference and Retreat continue to unfold; Timothy Stuetz has planned a week-long program including Seijaku Accreditation, Teachers' Conference and Meditation Intensive (see page 9).

The 'Events Calendar' on page 21 is full of upcoming Teachers' Trainings scheduled all over the country. Please note the announcement on page 20 of the revised Teacher Candidate Preparation Guidelines. Also, during this time of transition, Justin has stepped forward to conduct two scheduled Meditation - T'ai Chi Chih Retreats on the East Coast in June (see page 20) and joins Ed Altman at the Seijaku/Meditation Retreat (details on page 21) to be held at the end of April in Northern California.

Reminder: May 1 is the deadline for Summer *VFJ*.

We are currently receiving wonderful articles for each issue of *VFJ* about all aspects of the teaching environment, students' experiences, poetry, viewpoints, and more! We encourage your written submissions by deadline date please. An exception is any change to the 'Events Calendar' on page 21. Corrections will be taken as close to publication as we can possibly manage. Any last minute changes to the calendar will be taken by phone, please call Roberta Taggart, (408) 252-5406.

May deep peace and abiding grace accompany you as you journey into the glory and rebirth of Spring!

Roberta Taggart
for *The Vital Force* Staff

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READERS COMMENTARY

READERS WRITE

Thanks to the entire *VFJ* staff and especially you [Lois Mahaney] for all the support you provide.

Jan Martindale, West Linn, OR

I am so pleased that I will be receiving *VFJ* once again. Very generous of Steve [Ridley]. I am happy and well, and I hope you are doing great!

Tamara Johnson, Portland, OR

Thanks to all of you *VFJ*'ers for all the work you do. I look forward to every issue and keep them around to read and re-read.

Karen Scharf Morgan, Rio Rancho, NM

Thank you for your long, long work for *VFJ* and T'ai Chi Chih. Love,

Guadalupe Buchwald, Vancouver Is., BC

I am saving my old issues to give to my students (in hopes they will subscribe). *The Vital Force* is a joy to receive and share! Thanks so much for your wonderful efforts.

Nan Moss Corbin, New Fairfield, CT

Every time I get my *Vital Force* I go through the same process: I sit down, read it cover-to-cover, feel this and feel that, think this and think that (especially this last issue); then, as I finish reading, I'm aware of an increasing urge to do T'ai Chi Chih! Even rereading an old issue leaves me with that impulse and I jump up and do my practice.

So, thank you for a job well done, issue after issue. Love,

Beverly McFarland, Cedar Crest, NM

Thanks for sending the TCC Teachers' Directory, and the reminder about subscription ... Regards,

Ellen Tatge, Albuquerque, NM

Joy Through Movement
T'ai Chi Chih

Glad sounds
sweeping, swirling -
silent strength embraced -
one with air and light and water -
bubbling springs beneath our feet

Inner music
flowing, opening
dull and dormant sources -
rhythmic circles
pulsating passion and peace.



Spheric music
winding 'round us
wondrous, healing sounds
waking joy's pervasive response -
movement's mystic covenant.

Adria Neumann, C.P.
Dubuque, IA

READERS COMMENTARY

LETTER OF THANKS TO STEVE RIDLEY

Dear Steve:

I want to take this opportunity to thank you, thank you, thank you for all the love and dedication you poured into T'ai Chi Chih the past several decades. Words will never capture the deep transformation I've experienced from sharing your presence and insights. A transformation that bestows countless rewards and blessings on my students. The pebble you dropped in the pond will never stop rippling out through the world, gracing the lives of so many.

While I'm going to miss your very clear and inspirational writings in *The Vital Force* and being with you at the Conference this year, I treasure the reality that you are forever in my heart. A heart that is overjoyed on those spontaneous occasions when I'm practicing T'ai Chi Chih and feel as if it's you inside me doing the movements.

With great love, respect, and gratitude,
with blessings for your everlasting peace,
happiness, and sharing of T'ai Chi,

Timothy Stuetz, Anaheim, CA

ANONYMOUS RECOGNITION

I would like to send out a very special recognition to Liz Salada for her fine salute to Steve Ridley in the last *VFJ*. Steve has been an inspiration to us all and a vital part of the T'ai Chi Chih family. Steve has taught us what growth and evolving are all about. Thank you, Liz, for that extra special attention you gave to Steve's many and most respectful years of service.

Anonymous

ON HIGH STANDARDS AND BALANCE

A very special thank you to Liz Salada and the crew at *VFJ*. I know that you received a lot of information in the past few months. The love and the joy that went into the positive organization of all of the comments, opinions, evaluations, ideas, etc. makes me proud to be a part of such a positive and outstandingly

balanced TCC family. Thank you, thank you for the balance that we all need. Keep up the good work! Joyfully,

Susan Patterson, San Diego, CA

To me *The Vital Force* has always been an interesting mix of teacher experiences, inspiration and encouragement plus activity announcements. I'm so impressed with the way you set up the last issue! It must have been especially challenging and you deserve a special thank you. This is a difficult time for many teachers, and you [*VFJ*] provided us with a balanced explanation through the material provided ... Good Luck in continuing your high standards. They are really appreciated.

Hope Ridley, San Mateo, CA

JUSTIN SHARES A LETTER

Dear Justin:

As you can read in the latest *VFJ*, I deeply enjoyed the Teacher Accreditation Course in St. Paul [MN] this past October. ... I was surprised and saddened to read of Steve Ridley's resignation. At first, I had a lot of emotional response, but as I let the feelings flow through me, I came to a place of peace; a wiser aspect of my being that knows all is working out for good; and in time the wisdom behind all such changes will become clear.

I suppose I am more of a devotional type; and I feel assured that there will in fact be a great inner strengthening for all involved with TCC. It takes 'Big Mindedness' and 'Big Heartedness' to allow for all possibilities for individual and group evolution of spirit, regardless of how things may appear on a human scale to our human perception.

May all those who practice and teach TCC come to know that such trials come to offer us all opportunities to deepen our love and acceptance, as well as our faith and attitude of surrender. In the spirit of accepting all that is, With Love,

Barbara Peller Sommers, Cumberland, WI

IN MEMORIAM

Artwork from: *Together We Walk*, 1971

Illustrations by: Pamela Brunke

LEONA B. DEES

1924 - 1966

"Leona is a person, I suspect, who died with no regrets. She lived her life fully." He added, "Happy New year to you, Leona, where ever you are!"

Justin Stone, December 31, 1996

Leona Dees was an unusually gifted person. T'ai Chi Chih held a special place in her heart. During the last few years of her life she began to teach T'ai Chi Chih at the T'ai Chi Chih Center in New Mexico and at the Los Volcanes Senior Center and the Highland Senior Center. She planned to extend her teaching to other senior centers in the Albuquerque area. An enthusiastic volunteer, she spent many hours staffing the TCC Center in Albuquerque.

She and her husband, Marion, had established a T'ai Chi Chih Web Site accessed regularly by those interested in T'ai Chi Chih. Civic-minded, dedicated and caring, Leona exemplified those qualities which made her loved and respected. She will be missed by all who knew her. During her earlier years she served as a WAVE in the Navy assigned to Military Intelligence. After the service, she entered the U. S. Civil Service as a specialist in cryptography. For a time, after the death of her first husband, John Dickey, she owned and operated a flower shop in the Albuquerque airport. Her interests included anthropology and archeology. She also supported local museums through fund raising and volunteer work.

The T'ai Chi Chih community pays respect to her memory, mourns her loss, and honors her selfless service as we acknowledge her passing from this life in the arms of her husband, Marian Dees, on December 25, 1996. Thank you for your life, Leona!

To Marion we extend our heartfelt sympathy in the loss of Leona, your companion, wife, and friend.



TRIBUTE

COMMUNITY HONORS LOIS MAHANEY

Prepared by R. Taggart in collaboration with Liz Salada

The community of Hayward, CA presented an Awards Program honoring **Lois Mahaney** as one of its STAR volunteers on October 24, 1996. Each of the community leaders was chosen to celebrate the twenty years that the City of Hayward has honored its volunteers. The printed program proclaimed:

"Each STAR strengthens the fabric of community life ... and benefits all of us."

Describing Lois, the printed program went on to state, "Her quiet presence and sense of humor are great in any enterprise."



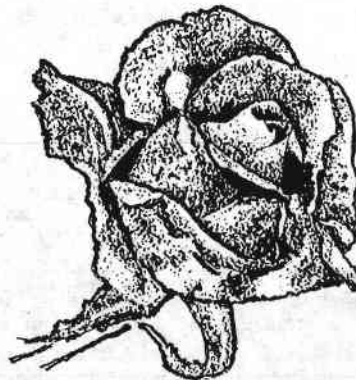
Lois Mahaney receives community award

Many of us know Lois as the longtime editor of *The Vital Force*, Journal of T'ai Chi Chih. She continues to serve *VFJ* and the T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) community as Resource Correspondent. She is responsible for the compilation and production of the *TCC Teachers' Directory*, but she also serves in many other ways, spending countless hours making sure the TCC community stays connected through her outreach/referral measures.

Lois has been involved with *The Vital Force* journal since it's inception. She continues to oversee the mailing of *VFJ*, hosting the quarterly gathering where volunteers collate materials, and then stamp, label and stuff the mailing envelopes (see back page). Over the years she has been instrumental in providing an environment for SF Bay Area TCC teachers to gather, using her home as a focal point for TCC-related events.

Lois, who turns 80 this year, actively teaches TCC in her local community and sponsors "Practice in the Park" every Sunday morning at 8:30 a.m. She manages three newsletters both national and local, does voter service as a board member of the League of Women Voters, and takes on projects for AAUW. A retired school teacher who still occasionally substitutes, she pursues many projects with the California Retired Teachers Association.

The T'ai Chi Chih family takes special joy in celebrating Lois' service to her community, and congratulates her on this special recognition of her devoted work.



TWO STALWARTS OF T'AI CHI CHIH

Justin Stone, Albuquerque, NM

There were two wonderful developments in T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) that have helped bond the teachers together in TEH. They are *The Vital Force* and the Summer Conference, and we are grateful for them.

The Vital Force was first suggested, and edited by Corinn Codye, and Lucy Hocking suggested, and hosted, the first Conference at Asilomar on the Monterey Peninsula, California.

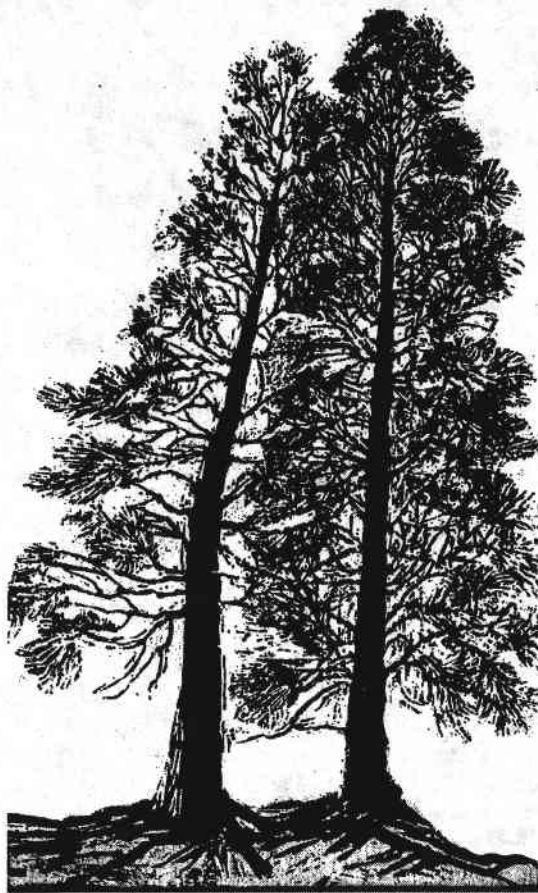
It is hard to believe that there is a teacher who does not want to subscribe to *The Vital Force*! Most teachers wait for it impatiently, and the editor, and Lois Mahaney and Roberta Taggart who work with Liz Salada, have given their time and energy to putting out the journal, it would seem natural to give them all the support we can. (I know when I need an address or some other information, I call Lois, who has it all in the computer.) *The Vital Force* is absolutely necessary to TCC. It is, above all, a place where teachers can write about their experiences and thus help other teachers. I eagerly read these experiences, and all teachers should be encouraged to submit articles, letters, etc.

Two years ago we had a wonderful conference in Denver, CO, hosted by Pat Hill and conducted so ably by Lia Ridley. Last year Susan Patterson was the host in San Diego, CA and Leslie Johnson-Leech was the able mistress of ceremonies. Everyone had an enjoyable time. But more than the fun we had is the opportunity to once again motivate teachers and reinforce the Inner Sincerity with which they teach. *Could anything be more important?*

This year Timothy Stuetz took on the difficult task of staging the conference, simply because no-one else volunteered. I believe we owe it to Timothy to support him in his work and to get reservations in early, not to benefit anybody but to perpetuate this wonderful TCC

'tradition'. If the summer conference were to disappear, wouldn't it be a great loss to all?

There has been talk that Albuquerque may volunteer to stage next year's conference. It has been held there once before and was very successful. *Is this a shameless plea to teachers to support these two institutions? Yes, it is!*



NOTES TO TEACHERS

1997 T'AI CHI CHIH TEACHERS' CONFERENCE AND RETREAT Timothy Stuetz, Anaheim, CA

Since Steve Ridley's resignation [as Appointed Head of T'ai Chi Chih (TCC)] I've received letters and phone calls from teachers:

- ⇒ who are not planning to come to the conference because Steve will not be attending.
- ⇒ who are very confused about the form of TCC they are to practice and teach.
- ⇒ who are coming to the conference to share the Gratitude Ecstasy, and Transformation that TCC has brought to their lives.

Regardless of how you feel about what's taking place in our community, I invite you to come to the conference July 25-27 and share yourself. I invite you to come to the conference and give back just a little part of what you've received from TCC. If you have a clear picture or some deep insights into how TCC wants you to practice and pass on TCC, the conference is a great place to share these. If you are looking for clarity on where TCC is taking you, the conference may be just the place to gain that clarity. Coming together as teachers and dedicated practitioners of this profound and powerful art is a tremendous service to yourself, your students, other teachers, and the world. Moving together, eating together, and sharing together is for much more than ourselves. The energy of love we create together has an everlasting impact on the entire world. Together we create an incredible, vibrating, expansive ball of Chi that Transforms everything.

In deciding whether or not to come to the conference consider these words by Yang Luk-Shen (1799-1872) as notes to The T'ai Chi Ch'uan Classics by Chang San Feng (13th Century):

"This is the theory transmitted by Master Chang San-Feng of the Wu Tang mountain, with a desire to help all the able people of the world to attain longevity and rejuvenation. The technique and art are the least things to be concerned with."

Practicing TCC on a daily basis brings countless rewards and blessings into my life. On days when I practice with another teacher, those rewards and blessings are multiplied. Moving is easier. My mind stays more focused. When I teach classes, those rewards and blessings are multiplied even more because of the group energy. And those rewards and blessings are multiplied even more at conferences where I can be with over one hundred other teachers who bring their dedication, love, and experience to share. This year we will be doing TCC together more than ever (eight to ten times). Think of the love that will be generated with this much movement! The ecstasy! The transformation!

We are also extremely fortunate to have the Golden Harp of Joel Andrews (*Emblissening Movement*) as background music for our Friday afternoon session of moving together and to transport us deep within as he plays a concert Saturday evening after dinner. Joel's divine music, a candle lighting ceremony, a tea ceremony, Justin's sharing of his Chi Enhancement Program and the origination of TCC, and being together are just some of the highlights of this year's conference.

You're also invited to participate in the Seijaku Accreditation course that Ed Altman will be teaching from July 23-25 before the conference and the Meditation Intensive I will be facilitating on July 28 after the conference. This Intensive will allow the experience of the conference to sink deep within and also give you new tools to expand your consciousness and deepen your practice of meditation throughout your daily life. Through TCC, silence, contemplations, chanting, Kundalini breathing exercises, chimes and Tibetan bowls, and several other "treats" you will experience the ever expanding, ecstatic bliss of your inner Self and learn how to hold on to that experience "all the time."

Don't Miss Out! Conference Deposit Due May 1st.
(See related articles on pages 8, 10, and 20.)

CHI ENHANCEMENT
(Development of the inner power, the JING)

At this summer's Teachers' Conference I will teach something new, how to increase the power of the CHI (called JING) for your own practice. The spiritual benefits, added to the physical Joy, are very worthwhile. I call the new development "Chi Enhancement". It is not T'ai Chi Chih (TCC), but, used in conjunction with TCC, it can accomplish wonders. Having found some hints in old Chinese papers, I worked on developing it for my own practice so I could pass it along to teachers. It is not, at this time, to be taught to students, though that time will come. "Chi Enhancement" may eventually wind up as part of Seijaku.

I have never discussed in depth the different stages a TCC teacher can go thru. My observation is that there are three levels, as follows:

1. Having learned the movements and then having been accredited as teachers, daily practice has contributed to the well-being of the practitioners, and there is no better way to learn than to teach. It goes without saying that movements must be done correctly; there are reasons why the movements were taught as they were in the beginning. New teachers are not really ready, at the beginning, to fully understand the substantial and the insubstantial, the polarity, and the meaning of complete circularity, but consistent practice can help bring them to a deeper level, the Essence of T'ai Chi Chih. This first level is certainly compatible with being a good teacher.

2. When the teacher, in his or her own practice, begins to feel that no-one is doing TCC, that TCC is doing TCC, he or she is sinking to a

deeper non-ego level. This is usually accompanied by a sense of purpose. I have received many letters telling me how grateful teachers are that TCC has now given their lives real meaning. They want to pass along the joy. This level is not usually available until TCC has been practiced for a few years, and the danger here is that intellectually (or emotionally) minded new teachers may overestimate their own understanding. But, if they have had a taste of teaching from this non-ego level, progress is sure.

3. The new development, enhancement of the JING, can take teachers to the third level admittedly not achieved by too many. As the inner power is developed, I believe the teacher's own growth is equal to that of the Indian Yogis who have progressed in Siddha training. Possibilities are unlimited, and with the progress comes a sense of gratitude. Obviously such progress is not possible for the argumentative person. I believe the sincerity of teachers will now make it possible for many to advance to this level, with great portent for the future.

Why am I offering such things as Sole Breathing and this new development since I obviously receive no financial benefits from it? Why don't I just keep it for my own practice, as do some teachers I have met in India, Taiwan, Japan, etc.? It is because I feel TCC has a much greater future, one that can benefit the world, if it is kept pure. You, as teachers, have a greater opportunity than you know, and I feel most of you will want to advance beyond the first level. Hence, my offering "Chi Enhancement" at the Conference. *Hope to see you this summer.*

NOTES TO TEACHERS

Art work from Card Series by Tori Fiore, Phoenix, AZ

T'AI CHI CHIH IS THE RAFT, THE GUIDE, AND THE VEHICLE Ed Altman, Fairfax, CA

T'ai Chi Chih is a profound spiritual discipline which has changed the lives of countless teachers and students around the world. The movements are based on specific principles which must be followed to facilitate the unobstructed circulation of the Chi throughout the body. Over time, as the Chi continues to flow and mature, great benefits may be received.

The Chi is *intelligent* energy, and when T'ai Chi Chih is practiced with sincerity and without emotion, it inevitably becomes the teacher of the student. Ultimately, there is nothing which will not be known. This is what Justin Stone calls the "growth of certainty."

The Buddha taught his disciples that the teaching is a "raft." It is useful to get one to the far shore, but then it must be discarded. Some misunderstand this parable, and have even used it to justify why they have altered the T'ai Chi

Chih movements in the name of "evolution." These efforts are misguided.

The Buddha's comments are instructions for how to conduct oneself *after* achieving Enlightenment. Once this is accomplished, and one is free from delusional thinking, what need does one have for the raft?

T'ai Chi Chih is a very sturdy vehicle and needs no modifications. We simply practice the movements correctly, and with sincerity. In doing so, we allow the Chi to take a larger role in directing our lives. The raft becomes the guide as well as the vehicle.

As accredited T'ai Chi Chih instructors, the purity of the discipline we teach must remain our highest concern. T'ai Chi Chih must be kept pure to ensure future generations have the same opportunity to reach the far shore.

